4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

137
493
34

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

DON'T LET THE RAIN CATCH YOU

159
731

I remember in 1907 we had a tornado on Saxby place. I stand in my door, and my grandma say, "I going now." And I say, "Yes'm, Grandma, i see you going. Don't let the rain catch you." And you know, the wind pick up the house, just as natural as that. And it carry 'em about two tasks [a task is twenty-one rows in a field]. And my grandma lay down on the stomach and hold on to the wire fence, to the post. Yessir, I know that! And I there home whooping and hollering, "Oh Lord, that big air cloud carry Grandma!" That's right!

[804]

We had another storm in 1911. I cook peas and rice that day. It was a Sunday. Josh was laying 'cross the bed sleeping. I lean against that post and every time I feel that house shake, I say "Josh, get up. You better get up and see he going to storm." You see, I had seen one. Done gone 'cross one in 1886.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

IT'S A SMALL PLACE, BUT I RATHER HAVE ALL MY FAMILY TOGETHER

159
• 931
(354)

I lost my house, a seven-room house, but I feel like it is the Lord's will. 'Cause I was burning oil stove from '41 up to now, and this have never happen to me before.

One day I went to work. I wash Tuesday night and leave a tubful of clothes for my daughter who always takes care of the house, and I told her to hang the clothes out. So she take my little battery radio in the yard under the tree, and she was hanging up the clothes, and when she look up, she saw smoke. She ran back to the house, but she couldn't even get in; the fire knock her back. She remember one of my little grand was sick in the house, and all she could do is run in the house and grab her. My son Johnny grab the rest of the children and take 'em over to my neighbor house and somebody call me.

One of my neighbor call me on my job, and my lady brought me home, must be about seventy mile an hour. I didn't feel so bad then, 'cause I thought fire engine would save at least some the furniture, but then I could see the housetop was falling in.

Then when everybody was together talking, I was sitting off by myself on Moving Star Hall, was thinking what would be best. I didn't feel like going anywhere far from the neighborhood. I have different friends offer me to come stay with them, and Mr. Jenkins, the place I raise on, he had a little empty house there, but I didn't want to go there either. I always want to be close to my meeting--Moving Star Hall.

So my neighbor, Nancy Field, she give me this little place she had built for the Florida people when they come. Those Florida people, they come 'round every year for season to pick tomatoes and thing, and she kept that little place for them. They just stays in it for a season--they'll stay any kind of where, you know.

It's a small place, but I rather have all my family together. If all of us have to sleep in one bed, I rather have all together. She kept manure and corn and all such of things in there, and all the rat been in there, but I was happy for it. I just get out and by my children, daughters, son, husband,

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159
● 73 they help me, and couple days we had it clean out, so now is clean enough to sleep in and eat in. We just work night and day. I sit up 'til two o'clock some nights. My son Johnny, he makes two window so it's light now. Then (354) we go and buy a wood heater so it's very warm and comfortable.
159

We getting 'long all right. I realize God give and He takes. He take down and He can build back up. He took everything from Job—wife, children, Job have seven boys. His wife say Job ought to curse God and die. But Job say, "You speak as a foolish. When I curse my God and die, what will become of me? But I'll wait on my appointed time until my change will come." So I'll wait, 'cause I know soon or late there will be some change. If you only got faith in God, won't have nothing to worry about.

And everybody was so nice to me, and that one important thing make me feel good. All my friends from here and everywhere come and give; those who don't have to give, come with a word of encouragement. I appreciate everything they did. My brothers, my sisters, my daughters, friends, what they don't have to give, they come and sit and talk and sing together encouragement, and this make me understand that this is the Lord will.

142
302
291

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

538
132
.731

That was what you call a cyclone. It was first called an autumn storm. But that was a cyclone. There has been several since that one, but none quite like that one. But I remember it well... I was about eleven years old then. It was the storm of (18)93, and it started on a Sunday morning. Still, Miss, I could tell you about it as well as if it happened just yesterday.

The weather looked hazy, just a little hazier than it looks right now. My mother, she was in church. My father was a member of the Baptist church down the road... I was the eldest boy of several children. We, in addition to one of my uncles from Hart, were living near where those Davis boys live now far in the corner section. My uncle Oliver, and Benjy Hart's eldest son, Lonza, came over Sunday after the old people ... to pass the day with me. Well, my mother left me home to cook dinner. Whereas, I told the visitors, I said: 'Some men say, "Man, my wife is not home." They often say, "I'll starve, because there isn't anything here to cook."' But, young lady, I cooked dinner for them. I didn't wait until they came from church. So I took charge; I prepared a feast for my uncle, my nephew and myself. And the later it became, Miss, the weather began to close in. The sun was shrouded with clouds and it began to drizzle rain.

Just after Yatta came home—I called my mother Yatta. Her name was Liza, but you know, I was reared by the old people then when one's mother was called such-and-such. I won't speak of it now. I called her Yatta. Well, she came home a little before the old man. She came in dripping from the rain. Then, a while later, my father appeared on the horse. I could see him coming with the umbrella over him. And young lady, as the evening wore on, the sun hung lower, heavier and heavier in the sky. (Narrative continues at length.)

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

248 132 133 The southern sea coast is subject to autumnal storms which occasionally destroy the planters' entire crop. Sir Charles Lyell, in his second visit to the United States in 1841 and 1842, commented upon this fact, mentioning that in 1756 the entire coast from St. Simon's Island, Georgia, as far north as Charles Town (Charleston) was overflowed, the sea rising six feet above its ordinary level.[44] Parts of the Sea Islands were under water in 1804 and 1824. In the latter year the crops were unusually promising. John Couper had matured a crop of some six hundred bales worth $90,000, but he lost most of the crop in twelve hours by the hurricane of September 14.[45] The next year his crop was nearly destroyed by caterpillars. On September 8, 1854, the coast was again visited by a destructive hurricane,[46] and since the antebellum period by two, one in 1893 and one in 1911, which have caused great suffering and loss of life.

248 [136) [730)

THE PLANTER AND HIS FACTOR

The very uncertainty of the crop, as well as the nature of it, tied the planter to the system of factorage so well known in England and other countries long before the settlement of the American colonies. Commission merchants in Charleston and Savannah readily credited sea-island cotton planters who might in one year make enough to pay off the debts of several years accumulation. It was customary, therefore, for the planter to spend his money before

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 253.

[45] Couper-Wylly Letters. May 24, 1828, John Couper to his brother James Couper.

[46] U. B. Phillips, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Plantation and Frontier*, I, 141.

11; Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 464 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor from the Island.

175 511 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them through the year, there were some who prospered. At [342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still [492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in [493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-[292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

175 •731 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175
731

ob de house blow 'way an' seem like ebery minute de house go too; so we hab to get out.

He ben da'k now, an' where to go, dat's de trouble. To make de misery wuss, de rain seem like he bus' de sky open to fall top we-uns. We get on de side ob de house where de win' can't lick we so rash, an' dere we stan' de lib-long night, jus' like a passel ob turkeys wid dey head down. De watuh get higher an' higher. We ain't know den dat de tide keep a risin' all night an' nebber go down a-tall. Fus' it ben to ma knees, den cum up to ma wais' . . . I hold on to de window sill tell ma arms seem like dey drap off. When de blessed daylight cum at las,' sich a weepin' an' wailin' in de lan'! I wish I ben dead, for all los' something: some dere house, some dere animals, an' some dere wife an' chillun. So much sorrow an' misery I nebber want to see agen![22]

731

In 1911 a similar tidal wave, less disastrous than that of 1893, again swept away crops, homes, and live stock. In both instances Penn School, in 1893 under the guidance of Miss Towne with the assistance of the Red Cross and in 1911 under that of Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, carried out the relief work and greatly aided the stricken people in beginning life anew.[23]

THE NEGRO AS A CITIZEN

175
837
84

A gaunt woman of uncertain age leaned dejectedly against the door of her little cabin, two small children pulling at her skirts, airing herself in the hot sun of the summer of 1865 as though trying to rid her soul of misery. Her story was mournful enough. She had been sick. She had hired a woman to do her work. Her husband, Tony, had taken a fancy to the other woman, and after a while

[22] Claire I. Macdonald, *Recollections of Juliana*, pp. 16-17.
[23] See annual *Report of Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School for 1912* and MS, "Storm of 1911" in files of Penn School.